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Testimony  
Connecticut General Assembly  
Veterans' Affairs Committee  
by  
Attorney Keith Anthony, Captain, USMCR  
February 17, 2015

### H.B. 6370 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TASK FORCE TO EXAMINE THE CREATION OF A VETERANS TREATMENT PILOT PROGRAM.

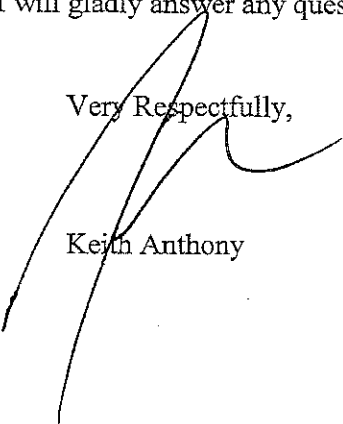
Senator Flexer, Representative Hennessy, distinguished members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer this written testimony supporting H.B. 6370 An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Task Force to Examine the Creation of a Veterans Treatment Pilot Program. As someone who has served on active-duty for four years as United States Marine Corps Captain and Judge Advocate, currently serving as a Captain and Judge Advocate in the Marine Corps Reserves and someone who has practiced criminal defense law in New Haven, I wholeheartedly believe it is time to form a Task Force to examine how we address veterans' criminal issues in Connecticut.

I typically represent one veteran per month on various criminal matters, and I am aware of programs such as Accelerated Rehabilitation and how veterans may take advantage of these types of programs. I think these are great program for veterans, but I think they possibly do not do enough to address veteran criminal issues. My primary reason for endorsing a Task Force is to see if we can improve the situation and ensure that any and all programs available to veterans are taken advantage of. I believe a task force would be able to ascertain whether it would be better to consolidate certain veterans criminal issues into one docket in a manner similar to what other states have done. I believe this type of criminal docket will allow all of the resources that are currently available (VA service providers, and others) to be implemented and used by veterans in the most effective manner, allowing veterans the greatest chance at rehabilitation and success in the community.

A Veterans Treatment Court would directly give guidance to the veteran by placing him or her directly in front of a judge in a semi-military setting biweekly or monthly. This judge would ensure that the veteran makes all medical and addiction services appointments and the judge would assign the veteran with an experienced veteran for direct and continuous mentorship. This second piece is overlooked because many younger veterans are not joining American Legion or VFW Posts, but they are still in need of that veterans mentorship that occurs in those organizations.

I do not know if establishing a Veterans Treatment Court in Connecticut is the answer, but my experience as an active-duty and reserve Marine attorney and experience in my private criminal practice leads me to believe that this Task Force is necessary. I should also note that I typically serve in a prosecutor's role as a Reserve Marine attorney, and this makes me see this issue through multiple viewpoints. Experts from the legal community, judiciary, veterans and medical and addiction intervention specialists should come together to look at the data involving the current AR situation. That data should be compared to data from the 32 other states that have Veteran Treatment Courts. Let's look at the success rate of those 184 Veteran Treatment Courts nationwide, and let's see if we can do it better here in Connecticut. This state does great work for all of their veterans. I see that daily in my practice of law, and I have seen success come out of the current Veterans AR system. However I think an examination of the current AR system for veterans is needed. Let's do due diligence for all of our veterans and form a Task Force to examine this issue. Thank you. I will gladly answer any questions.

Very Respectfully,



Keith Anthony